



OFFICE OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

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Linda McCulloch
Superintendent

March 1, 2004

To: OPI MASS Representatives

From: Madalyn Quinlan, Chief of Staff

Subject: Summary of OPI Activities for March 2004

Here is a summary of the current activities at the Office of Public Instruction for March 2004. This summary can also be found at www.opi.state.mt.us/MASSUpdates/.

Office of the State Superintendent

Highlights of State Superintendent Linda McCulloch's Activities for February 2004:

- Publicly released Montana's "Report Card" as part of compliance with President Bush's NCLB Act
- Met with Chuck Swysgood regarding budget projections for the next legislative session
- Was interviewed by Business Week, The Missoulian, The Associated Press and numerous television and radio stations on NCLB, Montana's "Report Card" and other Montana education issues
- Made a presentation on Montana's Reading First Professional Development plan to the Pearson Educational National Advisory Council annual meeting
- Participated in the monthly Land Board meeting and the OPI Cabinet meeting
- Addressed the 600 conference attendees at the National Education Association's regional meeting in Billings
- Held her monthly "Lunch with Linda" brown-bag meeting and introduced Bud Williams, OPI's Deputy Superintendent
- Attended the monthly East Helena School Board meeting and presented Alyson Mike with her Milken Award
- Worked on legislative initiatives from the Office of Public Instruction for next year's legislative session
- Met with Sheila Stearns, Commissioner of Higher Education
- Participated in the swearing-in ceremony for Bud Williams, OPI's Deputy Superintendent followed by a reception to honor Bud and introduce him to OPI staff and others in the education community and to thank Spencer Sartorius for his work as Deputy Superintendent
- Visited Belgrade Schools for a day
- Met with UM Journalism students and faculty working on a documentary on NCLB Act
- Along with OPI staff visited the Helena Public Schools on the Yellow School Bus Tour

OPI's Yellow School Bus Tour

Superintendent Linda McCulloch and 20 members of her staff visited the Helena Public Schools as part of her Yellow School Bus Tours to listen and learn about the challenges and successes in Montana schools. They attended a school board work session on school improvement and

Reading First, toured several schools and received excellent presentations on key issues concerning data, after school programs, telecommunications, and shared governance. OPI Tour Coordinator: Jan Lombardi at jlombardi@state.mt.us, 444-1641 or the OPI website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/YellowBusTour/index.html>

Montana K-12 Public School Renewal Commission

The Montana Public School Renewal Commission met February 23, on several aspects of a quality education and, regionalization of education services, and barriers to consolidation.

The next meeting of the School Renewal Commission will be March 15, 2004 in Helena at the State Capitol. Information regarding membership, meetings and resources is available on the web: <http://www.discoveringmontana.com/gov2/css/boards/renewal/default.asp>. Contact: Kris Goss, Education Policy Advisor, Office of the Governor, at 406-444-3862 or kgoss@state.mt.us. OPI Contact: Madalyn Quinlan, mquinlan@state.mt.us or 406-444-3168.

March Board of Public Education Meeting Topics

The Board of Public Education (BPE) will hold its regular meeting March 11-12, 2004, in the Meeting Room of the Montana Higher Education Complex, 2500 Broadway, Helena, and Montana. Tentative BPE agenda information items from the OPI include the State Superintendent's Report, the Annual School Nutrition Programs Report, an NCLB update and an Assessment update. Action items include accreditation recommendations for Regular, Advice and with Deficiencies, consideration of the Distance Learning Rule ARM10.55.907, Alternative Standard requests and action on License Surrenders and Disciplinary Action. Contacts are Board of Public Education Executive Secretary Steve Meloy (406) 444-6576 or Deputy Superintendent Dennis "Bud" Williams (406) 444-7325.

Now You Are 18

The "Now You Are 18" booklet, previously published by OPI, has been updated. This booklet outlines many of the rights and responsibilities that change, as a person becomes 18. It is a useful tool in discussing with seventeen or eighteen year olds the changes that will occur when they become adults. An official e-mail will be sent to notify schools that the booklet is available on line at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/LegalDivision/Now18.pdf>. OPI Contact: Bev Marlow, Paralegal, 444-3172, bemarlow@state.mt.us.

OPI Web Survey

The OPI website is an essential communication tool for providing education information to educators and the public. Superintendent Linda McCulloch is seeking information on how we can best meet your needs. Please take a moment to complete this short survey to assist us to enhance the OPI website. The survey is posted on the OPI web page at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/RegForms/web/>. OPI Contact: Internet Services Bureau at 444-3563, Cheri Bergeron at 444-2082, or Jan Lombardi at 444-1641.

The Reading Well Expands to Kindergarten

In support of Superintendent Linda McCulloch's READ Montana! Initiative, the Office of Public Instruction has partnered with the Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) to promote *The Reading Well*, "*Be Well, Read Well*". The purpose of the program is to promote wellness and reading.

More than a year ago, the Immunization Program and Medicaid's PASSPORT to Health Programs launched a book incentive program for 2 year olds. Beginning this spring, kindergartners will receive a book when they are immunized for school entry and their record is

updated in the vaccine registry. The "book incentive" project involves Tribal Health Services, County and Indian Public Health Departments and private providers. The local health department will coordinate service delivery with your school.

It is expected that *The Reading Well* program will not only increase immunization rates for Montana children, but also facilitate literacy and encourage positive one-on-one time between parents and children as they read the book together. *The Reading Well* project expansion was made possible through the support of Reading Excellence Act funds to support providing children with the readiness skills and support they need in early childhood to learn to read once they enter school.

If you have any questions on how to contact your local health department or immunization clinic, please contact Marci Eckerson (meckerson@state.mt.us at 406-444-1805) or Jackie Thiel (jthiel@state.mt.us at 406-444-1834). OPI *The Reading Well* contacts are: Debbie Hunsaker at 444-0733, dhunsaker@state.mt.us or Jan Lombardi at 444-1641 or jlombardi@state.mt.us.

Need To Insert The NCLB Report Card Charts Into Other Documents?

The NCLB Report Card webpage www.opi.state.mt.us/ReportCard/ provides schools with information on different education indicators required by the new federal education law. Its simple format allows you to generate custom reports for specific schools and districts as well as on a statewide basis.

Once you have accessed the OPI web-based Report Card www.opi.state.mt.us/ReportCard/, you can insert a Report Card chart into a word processor or page layout program. To insert a Report Card (SVG) chart into a word processor or page layout program:

First, create the report you need.

Right-Click on the graphic (Mac users, Click and Hold).

A dialog box will pop-up, select the Copy SVG command.

In the word processor, select the point where you want to insert the SVG graphic.

Select the "Paste Special..." command. A dialog box will appear with several options.

Select the "Device Independent Bitmap" option. Mac users, pick "Paste Picture" command.

Click OK.

Device Independent Bitmaps consume large amounts of disk space and computer memory. Documents that contain multiple Device Independent Bitmaps may become quite large and slow your computers response time. The color SVG charts have been designed to display and print in color while being printable with traditional Black and White Laser Printers.

OPI Contacts: Donna O'Neill, 444-0793 or doneill@state.mt.us or Joe Lamson, 444-3160 or jlamson@state.mt.us.

NCLB Increases Data Collection Requirements for 2004-05: Disaggregated Enrollment and Attendance Data

The No Child Left Behind legislation requires significantly more data reporting from schools, districts, and the state to the federal government than at any time in the past. One of the new data requirements for 2004-2005 will be the collection of disaggregated enrollment and attendance data from schools and districts. Beginning in October 2004, the Office of Public Instruction will require schools to report enrollment data by grade for the following subgroups:

- Gender: Male and Female
- Racial/Ethnic Categories: American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Black, Hispanic, Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, White

- Limited English Proficient students
- Economically Disadvantaged students: Free and Reduced Lunch eligible
- Students with Disabilities
- Migrant students

Schools will also be required to report attendance data for these same subgroups for the entire school population. Attendance data will not be collected by grade.

This new data collection will be tied to the MAEFAIRS enrollment data, but does not replace the MAEFAIRS enrollment collection. Users will report the disaggregated data on a separate data entry screen (for those filing electronically) or a separate paper form (for those filing on paper). In October 2004, the count date for disaggregated enrollment and attendance data will coincide with the MAEFAIRS enrollment count date. In the spring of 2005, the MAEFAIRS enrollment count date will continue to be February 1. The count date for disaggregated enrollment and attendance in the spring of 2005 will be the first day of the school's testing window for the MontCAS Phase II, the Measured Progress test.

The Office of Public Instruction plans to make sample formats of the disaggregated enrollment and attendance forms available to schools by April 2004. OPI Contact: Madalyn Quinlan, 444-3168, or mquinlan@state.mt.us.

Note: Disaggregated attendance data is also required when a school or district is eligible for "safe harbor" under NCLB. Until the new system is fully operational next fall, the OPI will continue to contact schools and districts individually when a safe harbor determination is necessary. The school or district will need to provide the disaggregated attendance data for the subgroup identified as a candidate for safe harbor.

Disclosure of Student Eligibility Information for No Child Left Behind

Title I requires States and LEAs to measure and report publicly on the progress of all students, and of students in various population groups, including students who are economically disadvantaged. School officials may use school lunch data to meet these requirements while remaining in compliance with the student privacy provisions of the National School Lunch Act (NSLA).

A revised Guidance for Release of Confidential Free and Reduced-Price Information to Education Officials may be found on the OPI School Nutrition Programs website <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/index.html> under Regulations & Policies to find Disclosure of Student Eligibility.

The guidance provides the requirements and limitations regarding the release of the names of individual children certified for free and reduced-price school meals and the child's eligibility status to persons directly connected with the administration or enforcement of a Federal or State education program. OPI Contact: Gwen Smith at (406) 444-5660 or gsmith@state.mt.us

NCLB Math/Science Partnership Competitive Grants Available

The No Child Left Behind legislation (ESEA Title II, Part B) authorized a Mathematics and Science Partnerships (MSP) competitive grant program. The purpose of this program is to improve the academic achievement of students in the areas of mathematics and science by encouraging state education agencies, institutions of higher education, and local education agencies to participate in programs that improve instruction and upgrade the status and stature of mathematics and science teaching. Partnerships must include, at a minimum, a high-need district and a department of mathematics, engineering, or science in an institution of higher

education. The Montana Office of Public Instruction (OPI) is responsible for the administration of this program.

A slideshow describing the program and the application process is available at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/TitleIIPartB/MSPMTPoint.pdf>. The completed application is due to OPI by March 3, 2004 and grant awards will be announced on March 24, 2004. The application is posted on the OPI website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/TitleIIPartB/MSPMTApp04.pdf>. OPI Contact: Linda Vrooman Peterson, Division Administrator, Accreditation, (406) 444-5726, lvpeterson@state.mt.us.

Administrative Rules Of Montana (ARM) And Board Of Public Education (BPE) Rules Available On The OPI Web

The Administrative Rules of Montana (ARM) and Board of Public Education (BPE) rules can be found on the Legal Division page at www.opi.state.mt.us/LegalDivision/index.html
OPI Contact: Bev Marlow at 444-3172 or bemarlow@state.mt.us.

Education Licensure

Teacher and Specialist Licensure Registration

As the educator licensure division moves into the spring season, we anticipate educators and specialists taking advantage of the OPI's new online renewal option. This option is an efficient and timely way for educators to renew, as renewal data is entered and updated immediately in the certification system.

The significant difference between online renewal and the traditional paper renewal is that the renewing educator can print his or her license when he or she finalizes the renewal process. This is an official license in every sense of the word and carries no less legal value than the traditional renewal license mailed out by the Licensing Division at OPI.

Several safeguards are in place to ensure that an educator could not reproduce and present a counterfeit renewed license. The validity of registered license can be verified by checking credentials of licensed educators in Montana by visiting www.opi.state.mt.us/cert or calling the Educator Licensure Office at 406-444-3150.

OPI will continue to assess and improve the system the on-line renewal system. Our future goals include adding clarifying language to the license printed online, instantaneous Web page updates, and to provide the capability for specific individuals to print a duplicate license. OPI Contact: Margaret Bowles (444-2580) or e-mail mbowles@state.mt.us

Montana Jobs for Teachers Web Page Survey Done

Thank you to all the individuals that responded to the Montana Jobs for Teachers Web Page survey. The results of the survey will be analyzed in order make this recruitment resource an even more valuable tool for educators and school districts. OPI Contact: Steve Meredith, (406) 444-3563 or smeredith@state.mt.us Margaret Bowles (406) 444-2580 or mbowles@state.mt.us

Assessment

February JUMP Newsletter

The February 2004 issue of JUMP, the OPI online assessment newsletter, is online at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/assessment/newsletters/feb2004AssessNews.pdf>

School Budgeting and Accounting

Preliminary Budget Data Sheets For FY 2004-05

Budget Data Sheets containing certified ANB and other budgeting information for FY2004-05 were posted on the OPI website on March 1. A booklet about budgeting called "FY2004-05 General Fund Overview and Worksheets," and several other budgeting resources are posted on the OPI website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/budget.html>. OPI Contact: Joan Anderson (406) 444-1960 or janderson@state.mt.us.

Audits

1) FY2002-03 Audit deadlines

A-133 "Federal" audits for FY 2002-03 are due to OPI by March 31, 2004. This affects districts and cooperatives that spent over \$300,000 of federal money (including USDA commodities) during FY 2002-03. For districts and cooperatives that spent less than \$300,000 of federal funds and received at least \$200,000 of revenue under all sources during that year, audits for FY 2002-03 are due June 30, 2004.

2) FY2003-04 Audits are Subject to GASB 34 Requirements

Audited financial statements must comply with a new format starting this year, so it is very important for clerks and superintendents to prepare for the change. The national reporting requirements are guidelines passed by the Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB). Two significant changes to prepare for are: 1) Districts must have depreciation schedules for fixed assets; and 2) Districts must write a "Management Discussion and Analysis (MD&A)" for the audit report. For more information about GASB 34, see the School Finance website's GASB 34 webpage at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfinance/gasb34.html>. OPI Contact: Denise Ulberg, (406) 444-0783 or dulberg@state.mt.us.

MASBO Plans Budget Workshops

The Montana Association of School Business Officials (MASBO) will hold day-long, "hands-on" budget workshops in 3 locations during March. Workshops are scheduled for March 8 in Great Falls, March 22 in Glendive, and March 29 in Kalispell. Participants should bring their district's budget data to work through the general fund budget during the session using manual worksheets. Presenters will be MASBO members and OPI staff members. There is a charge for the workshop.

For trustees and others who prefer a shorter overview of school budgeting, sessions will be held a day earlier in each location: March 7 in Great Falls, March 21 in Glendive, and March 28 in Kalispell. OPI Contact Lynda Brannon, MASBO Executive Director, at (406) 442-5599 or masbo@in-tch.com to register.

Technology Fund and Flexibility Fund – Elections?

Technology Fund—At this time, OPI does not know if there will be any timber production money available for technology state payments for next year. OPI will receive notice of the amount available, if any, in July or August of 2004. Districts may ask for voter approval for a limited Technology Fund levy under 20-9-533, MCA, or may continue to levy in FY2004-05 if a technology levy election already passed in a previous year.

Flexibility Fund—The legislature did not appropriate any money for the Flex Fund in FY 2004-05. Therefore, OPI will not be making a state payment. Consequently, districts cannot ask voter approval for a Flexibility Fund levy because law restricts the voted levy to a percentage of the state's payment. (20-9-544, MCA). OPI Contact: Bonnie Maze (406) 444-3249 or bmaze@state.mt.us.

Budget Amendments for Increased Enrollment

Based on the recent Spring Enrollment Count, districts with more than a 6% enrollment increase over the FY 2002-03 average enrollment counts may be eligible for additional direct state aid. OPI Contact: Mike Waterman (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@state.mt.us.

Indirect Cost Applications

Applications for indirect cost rates for FY2004-05 will be mailed to schools by the end of March and will be due to OPI in May. Indirect cost rates are OPTIONAL, but a district must have a rate approved by OPI each year in order to draw indirect cost recoveries off state and federal grants. (NOTE: Districts accumulating unused sick and vacation leave obligations for federally paid employees *should* use an indirect cost rate, since federal regulations do not allow termination payouts using direct charges to grants but do allow payouts from the indirect cost pool.) OPI Contact: Jim Oberembt (406) 444-1257 or joberembt@state.mt.us

School Elections Calendar and Handbook

1) Calendar for May 4, 2004, Election:

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/PDF/SchoolFinance/forms/2004ElectionCal.pdf>

2) The *School Election Handbook*, which was written as a collaborative effort between the Office of Public Instruction, MT Association of School Business Officials (MASBO), the Office of the Secretary of State, has been recently updated and is posted on the OPI website

<http://www.opi.state.mt.us/pdf/SchoolFinance/forms/ElecHandbook.pdf>. OPI Contact: Mike Waterman (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@state.mt.us.

FY2004-05 Tuition Rates

The maximum regular education tuition rates for attendance during FY 2004-05 will be:

- \$403 for Pre-K and Kindergarten
- \$806 for grades 1-8
- \$1,074 for grades 7-8 if the school runs an accredited 7-8 program or junior high
- \$1,074 for grades 9-12

Rates are set under MCA 20-5-323 based on 20% of the per-ANB rate for the year of attendance. Special education add-on rates are calculated under ARM 10.16.3818. OPI

Contact: Mike Waterman (406) 444-4524 or mwaterman@state.mt.us.

Pupil Transportation -- 1st Semester Transportation Payments in March

OPI will distribute the 1st semester state transportation payments on March 25, 2004. When the payment is made, OPI will email each district and County Superintendent stating that a payment advice has been posted on the web showing the amount paid by the state and due to be paid by each county. The County Superintendent should then order the payment of the county transportation aid. The second semester payment will be made in June. OPI Contact: Maxine Mougeot, (406) 444-3096 or mmougeot@state.mt.us.

U.S. Dept. of Education Hearing on Retirement Fund Restrictions to be Video-Streamed

The U.S. Dept. of Education's Impact Aid Program will hold a hearing in Room 317 of the State Capitol on March 23, 2004. The hearing begins at 1:30 p.m. in Helena, and is the result of a request made by the Montana Indian Impact Aid Schools Association for the Department to determine whether MCA Section 20-9-501 as amended by SB 424 (2003 Session) violates Section 8009(a) of Impact Aid law. Section 8009 prohibits states from considering (i.e., reducing) state aid to districts on the basis of their receipt of Impact Aid. SB 424 placed restrictions on districts' use of the Retirement Fund for retirement benefits of federally salaried district employees. The Department will determine if the Retirement Fund restriction, and any

resulting reduction in state aid (state guaranteed tax base aid paid in support of the county retirement levy), violates Section 8009.

The U.S. Dept. of Education has sent formal notification of the hearing to all Montana school districts. Districts are invited to present comment at the hearing and/or in written submission. The record of this proceeding will be held open for fifteen days after the date of the hearing or, upon request for good cause, for up to an additional fifteen days. Written comments or questions should be directed to: Catherine Schagh, Director Impact Aid Program, United States Department of Education, 400 Maryland Ave. S.W., Washington, DC 20202; 202-260-3858 or Catherine.Schagh@ed.gov.

If you are unable to attend this hearing, OPI is planning to make the hearing available to districts via video streaming using the following link: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/streamer/LiveLink/>. OPI Contacts: Impact Aid -- Tal Redpath, 406-444-3024 or tredpath@state.mt.us. Video-streaming -- Steve Meredith, 406-444-3563 or smeredith@metnet.state.mt.us.

Accreditation Division

Renewal Unit Information for Montana Educators

The OPI Calendar includes announcements of professional development activities that will be conducted by approved providers. Go to top of the Office of Public Instruction Web page <http://www.opi.state.mt.us> and click on the Calendar tab and select Education Events. If a professional development activity is awarding renewal units for attendance, the total number of renewal units available will be noted. This information will assist Montana educators as they continue to update their educator licenses. Please remember that one hour of instruction is equal to one renewal unit. For information on renewal units and forms, click <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/EdSvs/Index.html> OPI Contact: Carol Gneckow at 444-2417 or cgneckow@state.mt.us

Montana High School Regional Summit – March 12-13, 2004

Montana is the site for the first of seven regional high school summits taking place this spring co-sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, Council for Chief State School Officers, and the National Governors' Association. The School of Education, Montana State University Billings, hosts this region's High School Summit on Friday, March 12 and Saturday, March 13. This regional summit builds on the *Preparing America's Future High School Initiative* launched by Rod Paige, U. S. Secretary of Education, in the fall of 2003. The goal of these regional summits is to convene small teams of state-level policy makers providing them an opportunity to address the significant challenges facing today's high schools and American youth. State teams from Montana, North Dakota, South Dakota, Idaho, Utah, Nebraska, and Wyoming will attend. OPI contact Linda: Vrooman Peterson, Administrator, (406) 444-5726 or lvpeterson@state.mt.us.

As the state teams conduct their work, a concurrent conference co-hosted by the U.S. Department of Education and the School of Education, MSU-Billings will address the rural implications of President Bush's No Child Left Behind Act. For more information about the NCLB Conference, contact Sharon Weatherwax-Ripley, Events and Conference Coordinator, College of Professional Studies and Lifelong Learning, MSU-Billings, (406) 896-5875.

Career, Technical and Adult Education Division

Montana Career and Technical Student Organizations (CTSOs) will be showcasing the multiple talents of their members at upcoming CTSO leadership conferences. Thousands of students from around the state will attend these conferences competing in a wide variety of content and leadership areas. The top placers in the events move on to represent Montana at

their respective national CTSO leadership conference later in the year. If you want to attend an event that showcases the academic and leadership talents of Montana students, these conferences are the place to go.

- **Business Professionals of America (BPA)/DECA** – March 7-9, Great Falls Heritage Inn
- **FFA** – March 24-27, Great Falls, ExpoPark
- **Family, Career and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)** – March 24-27, Billings, Holiday Inn
- **SkillsUSA-VICA** – April 5-7, Havre, MSU Northern
- **Health Occupations Students of America (HOSA)** – April 18-20, Helena, Red Lion Colonial Hotel and St. Peter's Hospital

OPI contact: Karla Beagles 444-9019 or Valerie French 444-9076

Mountain Plains Adult Education Association Regional Conference

Montana is host for the 62nd annual Mountain Plains Adult Education Association regional conference. "The Voyage of Discovery - The Journey of Adult Learning " will be held in Bozeman, April 29, 30 and May 1, 2004. This is a premier regional conference and an excellent opportunity to get connected with what's going on in the world of adult literacy and basic education. For more information go to www.mpaea.org. OPI contact: Becky Bird, 406-444-4443 or bbird@state.mt.us

Special Education Division

Special Education Child Count Data Reporting

The special education Child Count data collection process is complete for another year. In this, the third year for electronic submittal, 93 percent of the data was collected electronically over the Internet. Only four special education cooperatives and nine school systems did not take advantage of electronic submittal. A new feature this year allowed school districts that maintain special education data in a database application to import their data directly into the Child Count application. Two special education cooperatives and seven school systems made use of this option. The next special education data collection requirement is for Exiting Data (data on students who have exited the special education program), and will begin around the first of May 2004. Electronic submittal of Exiting data is recommended. OP contact: Pat Reichert at 444-4430, e-mail to preichert@state.mt.us.

Educational Opportunity and Equity Division

Leadership Institute for Title I Part A Directors

All ESEA Title I Part A Directors are invited to a Leadership Institute on the afternoon of March 9, 2004 and all day on March 10, 2004. The Institute will be held at the Holiday Inn, Billings, beginning with lunch at 12:00 noon sponsored by the Comprehensive Center, Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory and continuing with sessions on leadership, student success, and management. The second day will focus on a variety of essential topics for ESEA Title I Part A Directors.

Since Montana will be monitored in May by the U.S. Department of Education for Title I Part A compliance, it is extremely important for Title I Part A District Directors to be well informed on all aspects of program and fiduciary compliance as well as leadership issues.

All ESEA Title I Part A Directors that wish to attend are asked to register by sending an email to gsmith@state.mt.us by 5:00 p.m. on March 5, 2004. A block of rooms is available at the Holiday Inn at 406-248-7701. Specify the Title I meeting, when you make your reservation. OPI Contact: BJ Granbery bgranbery@state.mt.us or 406-444-4420.

Gifted and Talented State Grants for 2004-2005 - March 9 Deadline

School districts interested in participating the state Gifted and Talented grant program must submit an "Intent to Participate" by March 9, 2004. The form is available on the OPI Website, <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Gifted/index.html>. The State Legislature has allocated \$150,000 for supplemental financial assistance to public school districts to strengthen the quality of gifted and talented programs and services. OPI Contact: Kathy Mollohan at 406-444-4317 or kathym@state.mt.us

Families and Learning: Celebrating Partnerships that Work Conference

The 4th annual statewide conference on Families and Learning will be held in Helena, April 14-16, 2004. The conference is a professional development opportunity collaboratively designed by the Montana Office of Public Instruction, the Montana Parent Partnerships Information Resource Center, the Montana Statewide Family Literacy Initiative, the GEAR UP program of the Office of Commissioner of Higher Education and the Montana Head Start State Collaboration Project. It will begin on Wednesday at 10:00 a.m. and conclude Friday at noon.

The theme of this year's conference is *Families and Learning: Celebrating Partnerships that Work* and includes workshops on early literacy and numeracy, cognitive coaching, school-based models of parent advocacy, working with volunteers and mentors, family/school/community partnership models, and will feature nationally recognized researchers / trainers from the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (NWREL) in Portland, OR.

Renewal units for teachers and early childhood professional development units will be available. A registration brochure is available at www.montanapirc.org. OPI contact: Joan Morris at 44-3083 or jmorris@state.mt.us

Montana GEAR UP Request for Proposals for the 2004 Summer Program due March 6

GEAR UP (Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs) works with schools in low-income areas in Montana to provide support for teachers and schools as well as different learning opportunities for students. The focus of the 2004 Summer Program is to offer high school students from GEAR UP schools a true taste of what college life will be like, and how they can better prepare themselves to be successful upon entering post secondary institutions. For more information about the GEAR UP Summer Program, or to download the RFP, visit the GEAR UP website at <http://gearup.montana.edu/> or contact Peter Butler at 406-444-0848 or pbutler@oche.montana.edu.

Montana Indian Education Association Conference

The Board of Directors of the Montana Indian Education Association will hold its 23rd Annual MIEA Spring Conference on April 1-4, 2004 at the Holiday Inn Parkside in Missoula. The Montana Office of Public Instruction has received a Department of Education Dropout Prevention Grant. As a part of this grant, OPI will host speakers and a "dropout prevention strand" of workshops throughout the conference. The MIEA Conference will be a great opportunity to learn, share successes, and network with others who are working to define the educational future of American Indian people. Registration information is available at http://www.mtiea.org/conference_2004/forms.html. Contact: Patty LaPlant, MIEA Executive Secretary and Conference Coordinator, 406-728-5615 or via e-mail apaki@mtwi.net.

Health Enhancement and Safety Division

Coordinated School Health

School Discipline Data Reporting

This year, school discipline (formerly suspension/expulsion) data must be submitted to OPI by June 30, 2004. Packets were mailed to school districts in September at the beginning of the school year. The School Discipline Data Collection Citrix Application has been open for data entry since September and will remain open until June 30, 2004. This application allows school districts to enter school discipline data over the Internet on an ongoing basis. The application is accessed with user names and passwords that have been provided to the superintendents or authorized representatives in each school district. The OPI encourages all school districts to enter and submit school discipline data over the Internet.

When entering data for the 2003-04 school year, please keep in mind some of the reporting issues the prior school year:

- The report is incident driven. In other words, if there is more than 1 perpetrator involved in a single incident, each perpetrator must be listed for that incident. All incident codes that apply to an incident must also be listed (all codes that apply to an incident and all perpetrators that are involved must be listed - even though an incident code may only apply to 1 of several perpetrators involved in the incident).
- For each school in a school district, the perpetrator identifier must be unique. That unique identifier must be used for every incident in which that perpetrator is involved. For example, if a school is using initials for perpetrator identifier and the school has more than one student to report with the same initials, the school must change the initials for one in order to make both unique. This could be done by adding a "1" to one set of initials. A validation is being written into the electronic application that will not allow same perpetrator identifier data in a school to be reported more than once with different demographic information (gender, race). This validation will be running in the application by the Middle of March 2004.

The OPI will be using Official E-mail to remind school districts about the school discipline data collection. All instructions and report forms can be found on the OPI web page at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/safeschools/index.html>. In addition, a power point instructional presentation will be available through video streaming on the OPI web page around the middle of March at this same web address. OPI Contact: Marion Erp at 444-1951, e-mail: merp@state.mt.us, or Pat Reichert at 444-4430, e-mail: preichert@state.mt.us.

School Health: Spring Public Health Conference

"Capitalize on Healthy Communities" will be held in Helena May 11-13, 2004 at the Colonial Red Lion Hotel. This year's conference will focus on the benefits of healthy communities. This year's main presentations will include: A Framework for Understanding Poverty, Childhood Obesity, Preventing Bullying: The Role of the Public Health Professional, and Young Children's Mental Health.

This conference will provide a wide variety of health topics appropriate for school nurses, health and physical education teachers, school counselors, and members of MBI teams. For registration information please contact: Kindra Elgen at 444-4254 (kelgen@state.mt.us) or Cheri Seed at 444-0276 (cseed@state.mt.us).

Physical Education for Progress (PEP) Program Announcement

The U.S. Department of Education's Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools released the FY2004 Physical Education for Progress (PEP) program announcement. In FY2004, the Department will distribute \$69,587,000 to an estimated 230 grantees. Applications are due March 22, 2004.

The application has two major changes from past years:

- In 2004, the grant will be offered for a period up to three years. In the past, only one-year grants were offered.
- In 2004, the Department of Education would like to fund more comprehensive grants that include the multiple program elements as outlined in the legislation for lifelong health and fitness, including nutrition. A physical education program funded by PEP must provide for one or more of the following:
 1. Fitness education and assessment to help students understand, improve, or maintain their physical well-being.
 2. Instruction in a variety of motor skills and physical activities designed to enhance the physical, mental, or social or emotional development of every student.
 3. Development of, and instruction in, cognitive concepts about motor skill and physical fitness that support a lifelong healthy lifestyle.
 4. Opportunities to develop positive social and cooperative skills through physical activity participation.
 5. Instruction in healthy eating habits and good nutrition.
 6. Opportunities for professional development for teachers of physical education to stay abreast of the latest research, issues, and trends in the field of physical education

The Application Package is available on the Office of Safe and Drug-Free Schools' website:
<http://www.ed.gov/programs/whitephysed/applicant.html>.

Help Teens Stop Using Tobacco Workshop in Great Falls

Did you know that in the 1980s, the U.S. Government shut down all Chilean grape imports because small amounts of cyanide were found in two grapes? There is ten times more cyanide in a single puff from a cigarette. The following workshops will be held at the Great Falls Public Schools on March 29-30, 2004:

- Intervening With Teen Tobacco Users (TEG) is a practical, researched-based program to effectively deal with students who violate a school's tobacco policy. Used frequently as an alternative to suspension, this 8-session program teaches the dangers and negative consequences of tobacco use and encourages teens to adopt healthier lifestyles, move closer to quitting and enroll in a voluntary cessation program.
- Helping Teens Stop Using Tobacco (TAP) provides students with the options, resources, education, motivation, and support to stop using tobacco. What sets this 8-session voluntary program apart from other cessation programs is the myriad of motivational components that work together to help students take the necessary action steps to quit.
- Seminar conducted by Community Intervention – A Minneapolis based training and publishing organization. For the past 20 years, they have trained thousands of professionals across the country – teachers, counselors, social workers and many more – to help them be more effective and successful in their work with young people.

Tuition: \$345 if you register one person or \$325 if you register two or more people from your organization by March 12th or \$395 after this date. Tuition includes your take-home materials, certificate and morning and afternoon refreshments.

Lodging: Holiday Inn of Great Falls at 406-727-7200. When registering indicate "Community Intervention" training to obtain the rate of \$69 plus 7% tax.

Contact: For more information or registration call Mary Beth Anderson at Community Intervention at 1-800-328-0417 or email marybeth@communityintervention.org or register online at www.communityintervention.org. Call Stormy Knight at 406-268-6771 for local information.

Title IV Safe and Drug Free School (SDFSC)

The OPI guidance regarding allowable and unallowable expenses for SDFSC has been updated and is available on the OPI's website at: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/safeschools/index.html> under "funding issues". OPI Contact: Cathy Kendall at cakendall@state.mt.us or 444-0829.

Safe and Drug Free School Coordinators Spring 2004 Regional Workshop

The OPI and the Montana Board of Crime Control announce a spring technical assistance workshop presented in two locations during May. Topics include research that links the connection between student assistance programs and academic achievement; children's mental health in Montana; and student drug testing in a Montana school. Registration is required by April 9th, and can be completed on-line at the following website: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/regforms/regional/> OPI Contact: Cathy Kendall (444-0829) or at cakendall@state.mt.us

21st Century Community Learning Center grants

The Office of Public Instruction is soliciting competitive applications for 21st Century Community learning Center grants for the 2004-2005 Program Year. Applicant workshops will be conducted as follows:

- Polson – Lake County Health Department Conference Room, Main Street, 10:00 a.m. March 3rd
- Great Falls – Heritage Hall at the College of Technology, 2100 16th Avenue South, 10:00 a.m. March 4th
- Glendive – Glendive Medical Center/Carney Conference Room, 302 Prospect Drive 10:00 a.m. March 8th
- Lewistown – Fergus County Assistance Conference Room, 312 Birch Street 10:00 a.m. March 9th

Applications must be received by the OPI or be postmarked no later than 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 12, 2004. An application form is available: <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/21Cent/Index.html> Interested applicants are invited to attend any of the workshops in their area. Registration is not required. OPI Contact: Gary Pfister at 444-3000 or gpfister@state.mt.us.

Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP)

There still are many children in Montana going without health care. Since, there is not a waiting list for CHIP, this is a great opportunity for those children to begin receiving quality health care. Applications are available by calling Healthy Mothers Healthy Babies toll free health line at 1-800-421-6667 or lease contact Mike Cooney at mcooney@hmhb-mt.org or 406-449-8611.

School Nutrition Program

School Breakfast Program Gaining Ground in Montana

Since 1992, the percentage of schools with school breakfast programs in Montana has grown from 22 percent to over 72 percent. This dramatic growth is due to a variety of factors including increased promotion and training from the OPI School Nutrition Programs, availability of start-up grant funding, interest in healthful school environments, and awareness of nutrition's link to learning. School Nutrition Programs continues to promote and support the School Breakfast

Program to better meet the needs of students in Montana. For more information, or to start a School Breakfast Program contact: OPI School Nutrition Programs (406) 444- 2501

Creative 5-A-Day School Foodservice Professionals of the Year Awards

As part of their support of the national 5-A-Day for Better Health Program, Dole Food Company is sponsoring awards for ASFSA school foodservice professionals who have developed creative ways to get students to eat their 5-A-Day. Two awards are being offered; one will go to a member that has developed a district-wide program that motivates students to eat their fruits and vegetables, and the other will go to a member that has developed a program for an individual school. Award winners will receive registration, airfare, and hotel for the 2004 ASFSA Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana, July 25-28, 2004. Applications are due March 15, 2004. For more information: Kelli Stewart, Dole 5-A-Day Program, (818) 874-4801 or www.dole5aday.com/FoodService/Fun/F_School.jsp. OPI Contact: School Nutrition Programs (406) 444-2501.

NEW Biosecurity Checklist available from the USDA

The USDA has developed this new resource to help schools protect the health of the children and adults they serve. This resource helps schools strengthen the safety of their foodservice operation by creating a biosecurity management plan to keep school meals free from intentional contamination. This management plan will also enable the foodservice to respond to threats or incidents of bioterrorism. A downloadable version is available online at: <http://schoolmeals.nal.usda.gov/Safety/biosecurity.pdf>. OPI contact: School Nutrition Programs (406) 444-2501.

National School Breakfast Week (NSBW) is March 8-12, 2004

NSBW is an excellent opportunity for schools participating in the School Breakfast Program to promote breakfast to students. It is also a wonderful time to start a new School Breakfast Program. The theme for this year's NSBW is "*Navigate Your Day with School Breakfast.*" School Nutrition Programs will have materials available for schools to use in promoting breakfast to their students, and provide assistance to schools that would like to start a new program. Now is the time to start planning for this week in your school. For more information: The American School Food Service Association <http://www.asfsa.org/meetingsandevents/nsbw/> OPI contact: School Nutrition Programs (406) 444-2501.

Best Practice Awards to School Nutrition Programs deadline March 15, 2004

The deadline to submit nominations for the Best Practice Awards to School Nutrition Programs is March 15. The four categories include: Reaching Needy Children in the Summer, Increasing School Breakfast Program Access, Increasing Consumption of Fruits and Vegetables by Participants, and the Healthy School Nutrition Environment. The nomination form is posted on the School Nutrition Programs website at <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/schoolfood/index.html> OPI contact: School Nutrition Programs (406) 444-2501.

New Body Image Curriculum: Your Own Healthy Style

A new middle school level curriculum covering body image is now available. This curriculum is intended to enhance positive body image and thus decrease the incidence of disordered eating behaviors among this vulnerable population. This curriculum is available free of charge and is ideally suited for Health Enhancement classes, Family and Consumer Science classes or any other classroom situation where health or media literacy topics are being taught. For a copy of the curriculum or more information contact Mary Stein at Montana Team Nutrition Program, (406) 994-5640 or mstein@montana.edu. OPI contact: School Nutrition Programs (406) 444-2501.

Summer Food Service Program application deadline May 7, 2004

Just as learning does not end when school lets out, neither does the need for good nutrition. Children who are well fed learn better, behave better and feel better. The Summer Food Service Program (SFSP) helps children get the nutrition they need to learn, play, and grow throughout the summer months when they are out of school.

Two types of programs are available, the area-wide program and the enrolled program. An area-wide program requires that at least 50 percent of the children living within the area served be eligible for free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program income eligibility guidelines. In an enrolled site, 50 percent or more of the children enrolled in a program must qualify for free or reduced-price meals.

If you sponsored the program last year, we extend our appreciation along with the hope you will continue and perhaps expand to additional sites or extend the duration of the program. If you are not a current sponsor, we urge you to give serious consideration to becoming one and to operate as many sites as you can, including non-school sites that may not be able to sponsor the program themselves.

We are committed to ensuring that the Summer Food Service Program is available to those children who are most in need and who benefit greatly from increased nutrition during the summer. Application packets will be sent out April 23. Previous year sponsor applications are due May 7, 2004. New sponsor applications are due May 28, 2003. OPI Contact: Sofia Janik, School Nutrition Programs, (406) 444- 2521 or sjanik@state.mt.us.

Got Milk?

If your school is not currently participating in any other School Nutrition Program, or if you have kindergarten and/or pre-school children who do not have access to your Lunch or Breakfast Programs, your school is eligible to participate in the Special Milk Program. This program provides reimbursement for milk served to children. The goal of this program is to enable schools to provide milk at a reduced price or free to students. The Special Milk Program is an easy way for you to help provide your students the nutrients they need to grow and learn. For more information or an application packet please contact: OPI Contact: School Nutrition Programs (406) 444-2501.

Schools and Communities Working together for Healthy Indian Families: Defeating Diabetes! Summit

St. Vincent Healthcare, Mansfield Health Education Center, April 16-17, 2004, Billings, MT. This workshop is open to anyone interested. Those affiliated with schools on and/or near American Indian Reservations who are concerned about diabetes in their community are especially encouraged to attend. This Summit will focus on physical activity in diabetes prevention, physical activity and nutrition education curriculums for the classroom, and showcasing successful activities and strategies currently in use on MT reservations to create healthier environments and how to involve parents, students and the community in this process. This conference is sponsored by the Montana Team Nutrition Program and the Montana Cardiovascular Health Program, in collaboration with the Montana Diabetes Project, Indian Health Service, and Tribal Health Diabetes Programs. For more information or to register, please contact Molly Stenberg, Montana Team Nutrition Program, (406) 994-5640 or stenberg@montana.edu . OPI contact: School Nutrition Programs (406) 444-2501.

HIV/AIDS/ STD Program

Winifred Teacher Training – March 23

The Winifred School District is hosting an HIV/AIDS Teacher Training on March 23, beginning at 1:00 p.m. Any interested teachers from surrounding area schools are welcome to attend. If you would like to attend this training, call OPI Contact: Susan Court at scourt@state.mt.us or 406-444-3178. Five-renewal units will be offered for education re-licensure.

PIR Day – Teacher Training and School Staff Offer

HIV/AIDS Teacher Training is an opportunity for schools to fulfill a PIR day requirement with information that everyone needs to know. The five to six hour training provides participants with HIV/AIDS/STD knowledge, blood borne pathogen information, school policy guidelines, and teaching strategies. The training is appropriate for K-12 teachers, custodians, bus drivers, administrative assistants, school food service and administrators. To arrange for training at your school, call OPI Contact Susan Court at scourt@state.mt.us or 406-444-3178.

Health Enhancement

School Health Profiles (Profiles) – March 1

The School Health Profiles (Profiles) is conducted biennially to assess characteristics of and trends in health education and health policies among middle/junior high schools and senior high schools. The Profiles questionnaire includes assessment of physical education and physical activity programs, nutrition education topics, nutrition-related policies, health education courses and asthma management activities.

The Profiles will be sent to school principals and their lead health educator on March 1, 2004. The questionnaire only takes 10-15 minutes to complete. OPI Contact: Susan Court, 406-444-3178 or scourt@state.mt.us.

Driver Education/Advanced Driver Education

Annual Traffic Education Conference

This year's Annual Traffic Education Conference's theme is Traffic Safety and the Renaissance Instructor and will focus on a wide variety of topics ranging from local issues to national issues - the latest in curriculum ideas to a proposed national office of driver licensing, education and more. The conference will be held on April 25 – 27, 2004 at the Great Falls, Heritage Inn; (800) 548-8256. Rooms are \$55/night

The participant can earn up to 15 renewal units or one semester credit through Montana State University – Northern. Registration cost is \$135 and MSUN Credit is \$90 per semester credit.

The registration form is available from the OPI website, www.opi.state.mt.us/driveded. Registration forms, payments (payable to Montana Traffic Education Association) and questions are to be directed to Jim Carroll, PO Box 637, Conrad, MT 59425, (406) 444-3285.

Traffic Education Pre-Conference

The Traffic Education Pre-Conference is titled Model Roadway Simulation Workshop and is held on April 23 – 24, 2004 also at the Great Falls, Heritage Inn. Featuring one of the nation's foremost innovator on effective driver education teaching techniques, Professor Fred Mottola, National Institute of Driver Behavior (NIDB). Participants will earn one traffic education elective semester credit and a complete model roadway simulation kit; the book, Your Car is a Monster: Ten Habits Will Keep it Caged; and the NIDB Driver Risk Prevention Curriculum CD-Rom, which includes over 20 movies and many supporting power point programs.

The cost is \$250, which includes \$90 fee for 1-semester credit and class materials. A one-day 8-renewal unit option is available for Saturday, April 24 for only \$125. The participant will receive the same materials as the two-day option that includes a more thorough review of the Driver Risk Prevention Curriculum. Registration information and forms will soon be posted on the OPI website at www.opi.state.mt.us/drivered. OPI Contact: David Huff, (406) 444-4396 or dhuff@state.mt.us.

New Staff in the Traffic Education Unit

Fran Penner-Ray is the new traffic education program specialist, previously from OPI Gifted and Talented. She handles traffic education program applications and reports, traffic education teacher approvals, and traffic education reimbursements to schools. Her hours are 9 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and can be reached at (406) 444-4432 or fpenner-ray@state.mt.us.

Library Scholarship Available

Montana State Library received a grant to fund scholarships for six Montanans to earn a Masters of Library Science degree. The scholarships, up to \$20,000 each, can be used for any ALA-accredited graduate library program (including distance learning programs) for tuition and related course fees. Work on the degree must begin in summer or fall 2004 and be completed by fall 2006. Scholarship recipients must work for two years in a professional level position at a Montana school, public or tribal library after the degree is received. Details about the scholarship program and application materials are available on the State Library web site: <http://msl.state.mt.us/greatcareer>. Deadline for applying is March 26, 2004 (postmark). Applicants need to list the schools to which they have applied, but they do not have to be accepted into a graduate program at the time they apply for the scholarship. For more information, contact Sue Jackson, Montana State Library, 1-800-338-5087 or sujackson@state.mt.us.

Lewis and Clark Educator's Resource Guide

Teachers hot on the trail of Lewis and Clark in Montana can follow a new guide to find the best educational resources available to complete their mission of discovery. The Montana Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission sent more than 600 copies of the Lewis and Clark Educator's Resource Guide to school and public libraries across the state.

The Montana Lewis and Clark Bicentennial Commission consulted with Lewis and Clark experts about the best resources including books for elementary and secondary students, curriculum guides, available hands-on teaching trunks, videos, and websites. The resources are ranked using a four star rating system for accuracy, multi-cultural perspective, instruction viability, usability, and student appeal. They are cross-referenced and arranged for easy use.

The project was realized through the efforts of several groups including Qwest of Montana, which provided the printing of the guide, Montana Fish, Wildlife and Parks, the Missouri River Basin Interagency Roundtable and coordinated by the Native Waters Native American education project.

The guide is also available on the OPI Lewis and Clark webpage <http://www.opi.state.mt.us/Lewis&Clark/index.html>. If your school library hasn't received its free copy, or needs more of them, contact Bonnie Sachatello-Sawyer at 406-994-5392. OPI Contact: Jan Lombardi at jlombardi@state.mt.us or 444-1641.

2004 Japanese Government Scholarships

The Consulate-General of Japan in Seattle is now accepting applications for the following 2004 Japanese Government Scholarships for studying in Japan. U.S. citizens living in the states of Washington, Montana, and Northern Idaho are eligible.

- Japanese Studies Scholarship, (Deadline: Monday, March 22, 2004)
This program offers students an intensive course of the Japanese language and introduction to Japanese studies. Available to undergraduate students who are currently majoring or minoring in Japan-related studies at a 4-year university. Applicants must be 18 to 29 years of age as of April 1, 2004. Term of scholarship: Oct. 2004-Sept. 2005.
- Teacher Training Student Scholarship (Deadline: Monday, March 22, 2004)
A one and a half-year teacher training program at Japanese universities is available to primary and secondary school teachers with at least five years of teaching experience. Term of scholarship: Oct. 2004-March 2006. Applicants need to be less than 35 year of age as of April 1, 2004.

Scholarship Benefits include:

1. Monthly stipend
(135,000 yen for Japanese Studies Scholarship)
(175,000 yen for Teacher Training Student Scholarship)
2. Travel expenses to and from Japan
3. Arrival Allowance of 25,000 yen
4. Exemption of school fees for entrance examination, matriculation, and tuition
5. Housing Assistance
6. Subvention for medical fees
(Details may subject to change)

For an application or more information, contact the Consulate-General of Japan at Seattle Scholarship Desk at education@cgjapansea.org or 206-682-9107 ext.135.